



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

TO: Reporters and Editors
RE: Medicare, Bush Speech in Grand Rapids
DA: Wednesday, January 29, 2003

Sen. Chuck Grassley issued the comment below in response to the President's speech on Medicare today in Michigan. Sen. Grassley is chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance. During the last Congress he led a tripartisan coalition of senators who developed comprehensive legislation to add a prescription drug benefit to a modernized Medicare program.

"President Bush is committed to getting prescription drug coverage to seniors this year. Four-hundred billion dollars over 10 years is real money. It will create good drug coverage and improve Medicare's other benefits.

"I agree that we need to strengthen Medicare, first by adding prescription drug coverage that's available for all seniors, not just those who switch into managed care. We need to make other improvements to the program, as well, like adding free preventive services and better protection against catastrophic illness.

"All of our changes should be voluntary. If you like what you have now, you should be able to keep it. That means I won't draw lines on drug coverage. All seniors should have access to affordable prescription drug coverage, regardless of the choice they make.

"As chairman, I'm committed to putting the politics of prescription drugs behind us. I'll be working across party lines to pass out of committee a comprehensive, bipartisan prescription drug and Medicare improvement bill by early summer."